



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Health department clinics to offer influenza vaccine to those ages 50-64 and household contacts of high-risk people

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health now has expanded the definition of "high risk" people who may receive flu shots to include adults ages 50 to 64 and out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of those in the high-risk categories, based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As of Jan. 3, the health department had an inventory of over 13,500 doses of influenza vaccine left to be administered. Each county health department will announce influenza clinic times, dates, locations and whether these remaining doses will be given by appointment, on a walk-in basis or a combination. A limited number of private physicians in Alabama also will receive additional doses of influenza vaccine.

The Health Department continues its surveillance of influenza-like illness and confirmed influenza to monitor disease activity. Three influenza cases have been confirmed this season in Alabama.

"We are pleased that we can now vaccinate and help protect more people from influenza. This expansion will help ensure that the influenza vaccine is used," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer.

Priority groups for vaccination with inactivated influenza vaccine are now as follows:

- adults age 50 or older,
- household contacts of persons in high-risk groups,
- all children aged 6-23 months,
- persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions,
- all women who will be pregnant during influenza season,
- residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities,
- children 6 months -18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy,
- health care workers with direct patient care, and

- out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged less than 6 months.

In Alabama influenza peaks in the months of January and February.

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